

**Strategy 13. Adopt an overarching policy for levee design, investment, financing, priorities, and maintenance.**

*Performance Standard: The current level of congruence of X% (to be calculated) should be improved to 100% by 2100.*

The levee system is central to all Delta uses and services, and levee investment will shape the future Delta. Levees also have a significant impact on the ecosystem. To create a path to a sustainable Delta ecosystem, economy and water reliability, we must pursue a new set of priorities and actions. Land uses and island services and infrastructure that are protected by levees must drive levee designs. Furthermore, because the Delta and its services must be fiscally supported by its beneficiaries, the ability of beneficiaries to pay for levee maintenance and improvements will directly affect the long-term nature of Delta islands and tracts. Public funding should be directed primarily to levees that support State interests, especially ecosystem vitality and water conveyance. It is possible, even likely, that islands or tracts that are in low-value private uses and cannot afford levee maintenance and repairs will eventually revert to wetlands or open water habitat.

<p>Vision recommendations met:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9 12</p>
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<p>Performance measure:</p> <p>Level of congruence between levees and land use types (+)</p>
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This entire Strategic Plan embodies following policies:

- The current configuration of islands and waterways is critical to many current uses and services dependent on the existing levee system. But the current levee system is not now providing adequate protection, and the existing landscape will not be sustainable over the long run.
- A range of levee design types and standards should be used to respond to sea level rise, river flooding, subsidence, and seismic risk.
- Environmentally friendly levee designs should be incorporated wherever possible.
- Application of the range of levee design types and standards should be keyed to the land uses and services protected, and to the levels of risk reduction deemed appropriate for each.
- The Delta should achieve full congruence between levels of protection and land uses and services at risk.
- All beneficiaries of levee protection should pay their appropriate share of the costs.

This strategy includes the following critical elements:

- Within one year, DWR should adopt a Levee Policy which should:
  - Link levee designs with land uses
  - Address seismic risk, climate change, subsidence and sea level rise
  - Identify appropriate levee protection levels and designs for the following land uses and services, at a minimum:
    - Wetlands and floodplains
    - Agricultural lands
    - Critical infrastructure
    - Peripheral urban areas
    - Specific Delta cities, towns, and communities
  
- The CDEW Plan should:
  - Set priorities for levee improvements, maintenance and repairs.
  - Map Delta islands and levees showing priorities and targets for transition to full congruence.
  - Include land use considerations, such as restricting land intensification in flood-prone areas.
  - Identify beneficiaries of levee improvements and determine cost sharing among identified beneficiaries.
  
- DWR should adjust the levee subventions program to support State interests and take necessary action to extend legislative authority for it.